

Standard 6-5 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the development and the impact of the Renaissance and the Reformation on Europe and the rest of the world.

6-5.2 Summarize the features and contributions of the Italian Renaissance, including the importance of Florence and the accomplishments of the Italians in art, music, literature, and architecture. (H)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

This is the first time students have been taught about the period known as the Italian Renaissance.

In Global Studies, students will compare the impact of the Renaissance and the Reformation on life in Europe, including the changes in the status of women, the revolution in art and architecture, the causes and effects of divisions in religious affiliation, and the presence of social oppression and conflict (GS-3.1).

It is essential for students to understand that the Renaissance began, and had its greatest expression, in the Italian city-states. Because of the location of the Italian peninsula (in relation to Western Europe, the Byzantine Empire, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Muslim world) many Italian city-states became centers of trade and banking during this time. This economic growth allowed city-states such as Florence, Milan, and Venice to acquire great wealth and develop a degree of independence in governing themselves. These two attributes were critical in promoting the arts and ideas that characterized the Renaissance and were key components as to why the Renaissance began in Italy. (It should be noted that the use of the term “Italy” in this indicator is during the time of the Renaissance.) Two significant features of the Renaissance were the renewed interest in ancient Greece/Rome and the development of humanist ideas. Many of the artists, writers, and thinkers built upon the ideas or principles of the classical world and sought to improve or expand them. The classical influence combined with the humanist emphasis on individual potential and achievement, gave rise to the unique styles and expression of the Renaissance seen in its art, architecture, science, religion, and philosophy. The city-state of Florence is often considered the birthplace of the Renaissance. The wealth and patronage of the Medici family supported great works of art produced in Florence during this time and many of the greatest figures of the Renaissance, including Michelangelo, Botticelli, and Machiavelli, were associated with the city-state. Because humanism emphasized the individual and daily life, paintings, sculptures, and other works of art accentuated realism to a greater degree than the idealist works of the medieval period. From this period were born dramatic shifts of style in all the major art forms. The desire to make painting more realistic and lifelike led to the development of new techniques such as *chiaroscuro* (using light and shading) and perspective (showing depth through three-dimensionality). Sculpting placed an emphasis on anatomical realism and saw the use of *contrapposto* (having the body twisted as the head and/or shoulders face a different direction than the hips or legs). The same drive for realism was seen in the rise of vernacular literature that could be read by the masses, and in the political realism of Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. Music during the Renaissance saw a greater emphasis on vocals and

a wider support among the masses after the development of the printing press. Furthermore, like art and philosophy, music became more secular during the Renaissance. In architecture, the classical influence is best represented in the continued development of the arch and dome utilized in the Duomo in Florence and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

It is not essential for students to know the names of particular northern Italian art patrons or of specific works of art, architecture, and literature. Noteworthy examples of Renaissance accomplishments that *could* be utilized include, but *are not limited to*, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and *il Duomo* in Florence, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Assessment guidelines: In order to measure understanding of the features and contributions of the Italian Renaissance, appropriate assessments could require the student to **recognize** Florence's geographic location as a prime factor in its economic prosperity and **explain** the connection between this wealth and the outpouring of Italian artistic creativity. Students should be able to **describe** characteristics of Renaissance art, architecture, and literature and **identify** cases where these characteristics are exemplified. It would be appropriate to have students **compare** classical, medieval, and Renaissance art or architecture so as to **identify** or **explain** features such realism, perspective and *chiaroscuro* (although it's not essential to know the definition of these terms).